

# FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

73/327/9	Billerica		153
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Town Chelmsford  
 Place (neighborhood or village) Chelmsford Center  
 Address 40 Billerica Rd.  
 Historic Name Almon J. Sweet House  
 Uses: Present residence: single family  
 Original residence  
 Date of Construction 1883 or 1887  
 Source tax records



MA\_Chelmsford\_BillericaRoad\_40\_IMG\_4239 CD CHC\_04 4/30/2007 FSM

Style/Form  
 Architect/Builder

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation rough boulders cemented over to provide a smooth surface

Wall/Trim clapboard

Roof ridge from front to back

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures**

none

**Major Alterations (with dates)**

- 1901 attached barn burned to ground; replaced by
- 1906 ell rear section is a shed with meat hooks; front section is present kitchen/pantry
- 1956 kitchen remodeled

Condition good

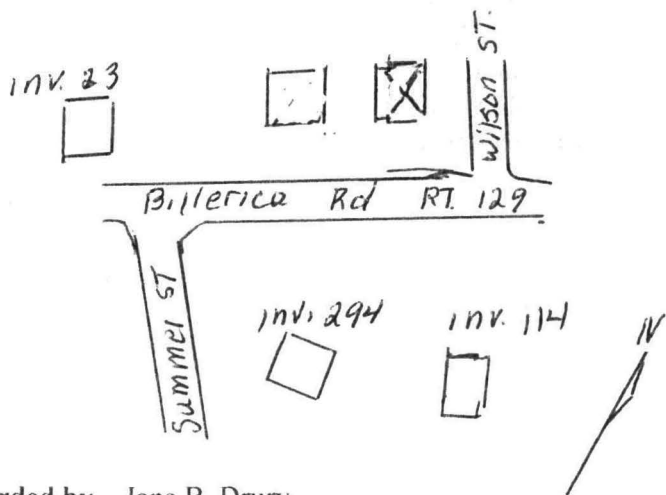
Moved  no  yes Date

Acreage 7800 sq. ft.

Setting This residence stands on the northwest corner of Billerica & Wilson Streets. A town sidewalk is located next to Billerica Rd. A wide, paved driveway leads up to the main door of the house & up to the garage/barn. Another short paved drive leads from this to Wilson St. (see continuation sheet)

**Sketch Map**

Draw a map showing the building's location in relation to the nearest cross streets and/or major natural features. Show all buildings between inventoried building and nearest intersection or natural feature. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Circle and number the inventoried building. Indicate north.



Recorded by Jane B. Drury

Organization for Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date (month year) April 2007

## BUILDING FORM

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION see continuation sheet

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

The single family residence at 40 Billerica Rd. is similar in architecture of several other homes built in the Victorian era. The main part of the residence measures 21 feet wide by 26 feet deep, and it has 1 ½ stories. Behind this is a barn/garage connected by a shed 1 story high area, 15 feet wide of 20 feet deep. An open porch is located on the right side of this portion of the house. The one story barn, 18 feet by 20 feet, is attached to the rear of the shed. Double brackets and plain corner boards are found throughout.

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE see continuation sheet

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

In the fall of 1881 Bertha M. Wilson, wife of Moses Wilson, purchased the land at 40 Billerica Rd. and had the house erected in 1883 or 1887. The Wilsons did not live here nor did the Ordways, to whom Bertha sold the property in 1908. Meanwhile, the Almon J. Sweet family rented the house. He was a native of Pottsdam, NY where he had been born 64 years before. The family, including at least two sons and two daughters, came to Chelmsford about 1885. A member of the American Order of United Workmen, A.J.W. Sweet became engaged in the lightning rod business, in which he was well known. Years later Alice, one of the daughters, recalled her memories of the house. There was a pump in the kitchen and a well – Mrs. Sweet kept butter and milk cool by putting it in a bucket down the well. The parlor was only used on Christmas, as her daughter remembered. In back of the kitchen was a passageway to the barn. A 2 or 3 hole outhouse was in the passageway.

According to the Lowell Courier July 26, 1901, "About 1 o'clock Wednesday afternoon the barn connected with the Wilson cottage at the corner of Wilson and Billerica streets, Chelmsford Centre, was discovered to be on fire and notwithstanding the vigorous efforts of the villagers who rallied in large numbers it was burned to the ground. There was no live stock in it except fowl and these were saved. The barn was connected to the house by the L and it was thought as first that the house would follow the barn but it was saved although all the furniture was removed in anticipation of the worst. The cause of the fire is unknown. The property is owned by Mrs. Bertha M. Wilson and occupied by Mr. A.J.W. Sweet and family." However, Mrs. Sweet later said that her two older brothers set fire to the barn by smoking in back of it. During the fall of 1905 Almon Sweet came down with an illness which confined him to the house until his death there June 25, 1906. His wife, one son and two daughters survived him and soon moved out.

In 1908 Bertha Wilson sold the property to Charles Ordway of Everett. The house continued to be rented out until being purchased by William & Nina Greig in 1924. In 1943 their son Wallace, who had been living with them, was serving in the Army. William worked as a printer and Nina was a housewife. The present owners purchased the property in 1946. They have 3 daughters and a son, and the father's mother also lived with them for a while.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES see continuation sheet

Lowell Courier-Citizen: June 26, 1906, morning edition  
Letter of Mrs. Joan Bryant, granddaughter of the Sweets: Dec. 1979  
Chelmsford street directories; Assessors' records; Vital Records; Tax/real Estate records  
Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds: Bk. 150, pg. 145 (9/16/1881)  
Building Inspector's records

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town  
CHELMSFORD

Property Address  
40 BILLERICA RD.

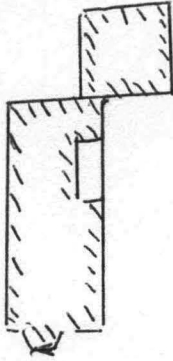
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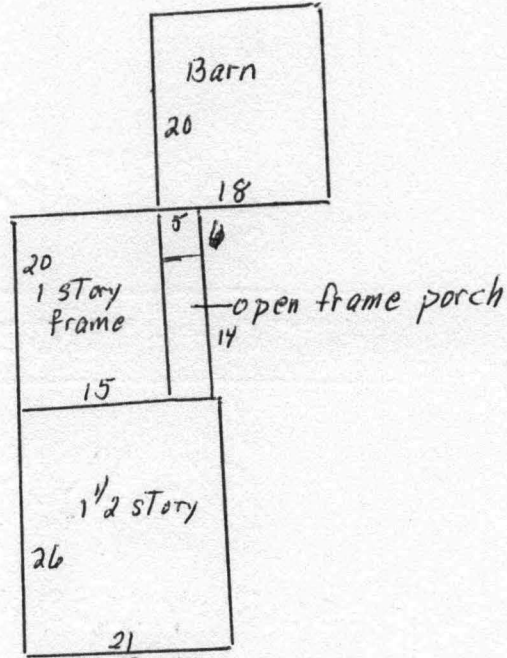
ALTERATIONS

Plan Book M,  
Plan page 97  
1915



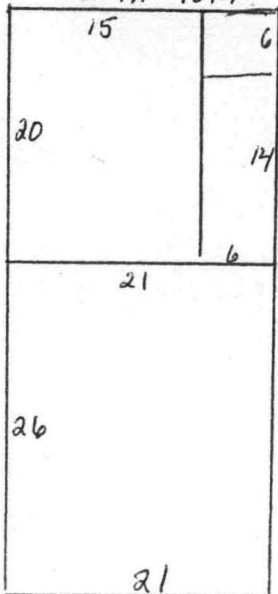
WILSON STREET

BillERICA Road



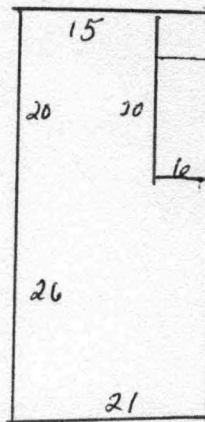
Assessors' record  
6/24/1971

4 1story barn  
with loft



2/28/2007

Assessors' Records



9/14/2006

Assessors' Computer does not include barns

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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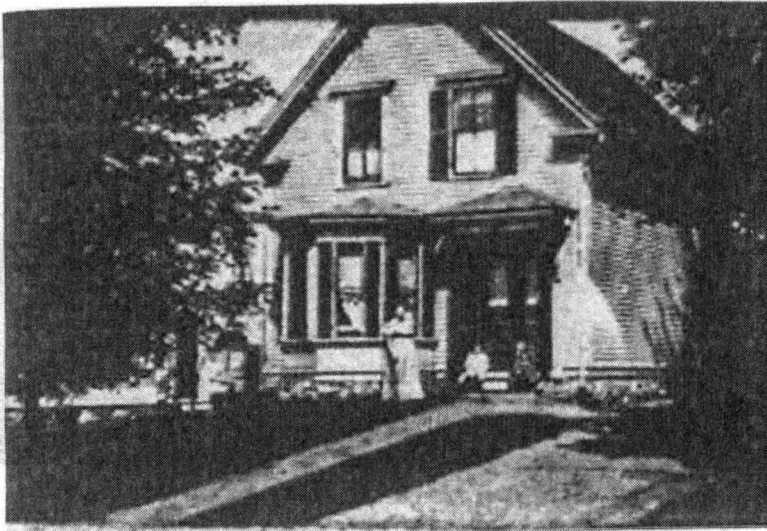
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SETTING

A plastic picket fence goes from the left side of house to lot line; a right angle turn back to a short distance of wire fence before again becoming the picket type. The fence continues along the rear line of the lot, behind which is an apartment complex. The fence continues forward from the rear to midway along the right line of the lot.

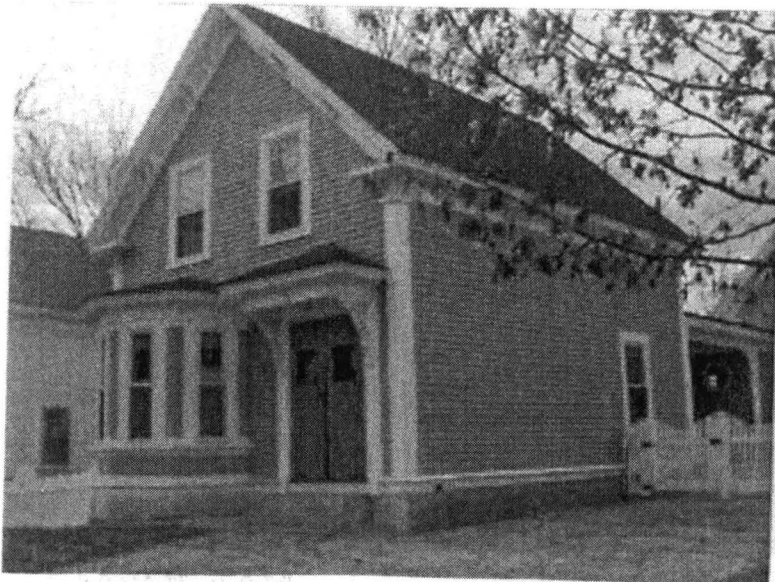


ca 1905

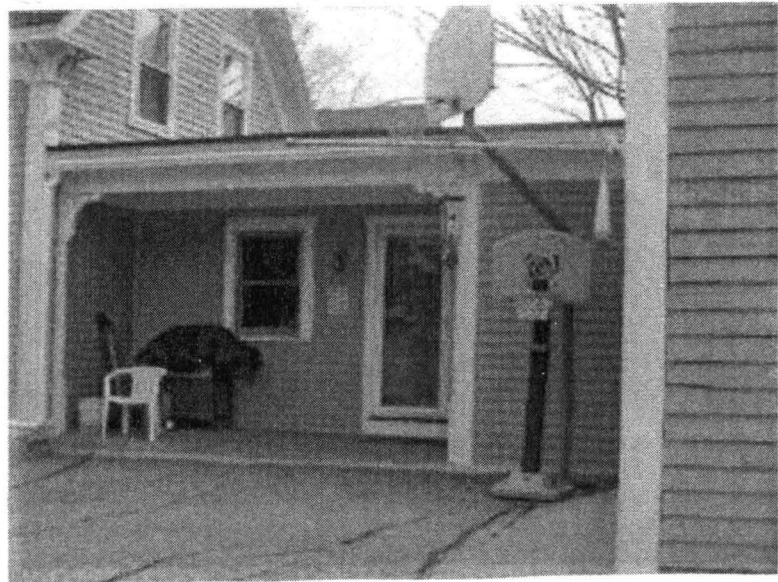


OCT. 2000

April 19, 2007



Right side



E11

Barn/ garage

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

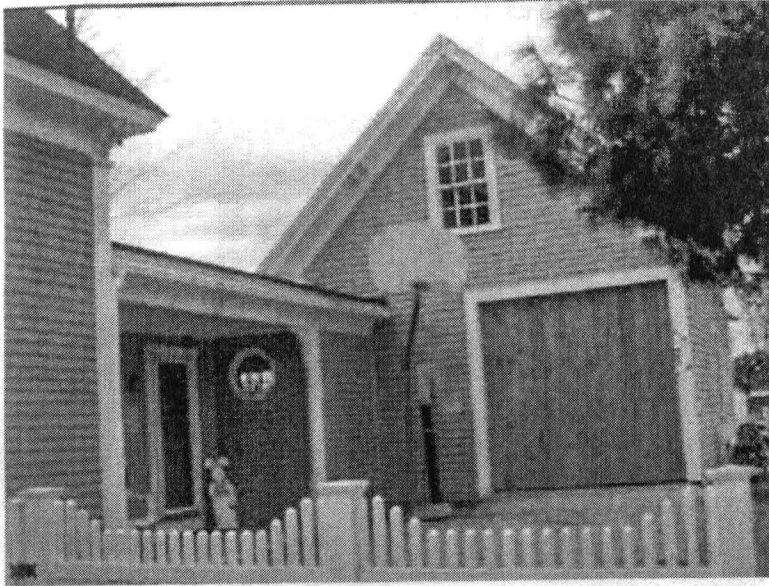
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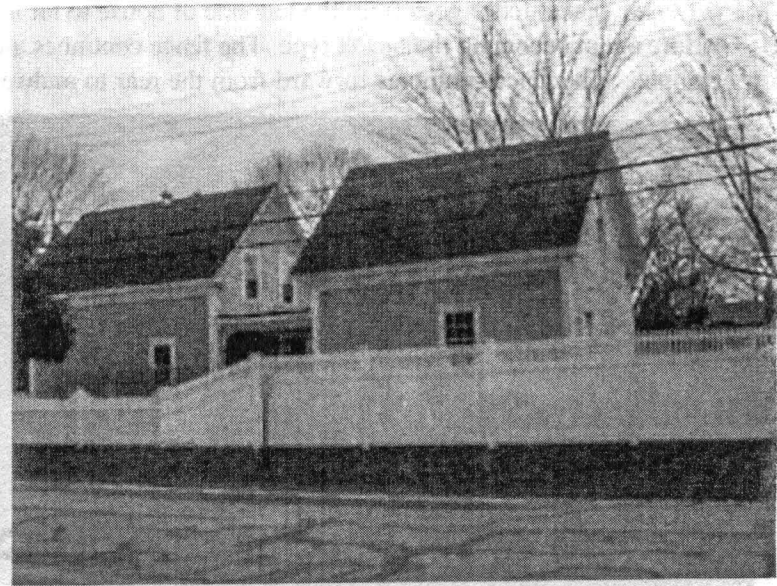
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April 19, 2007



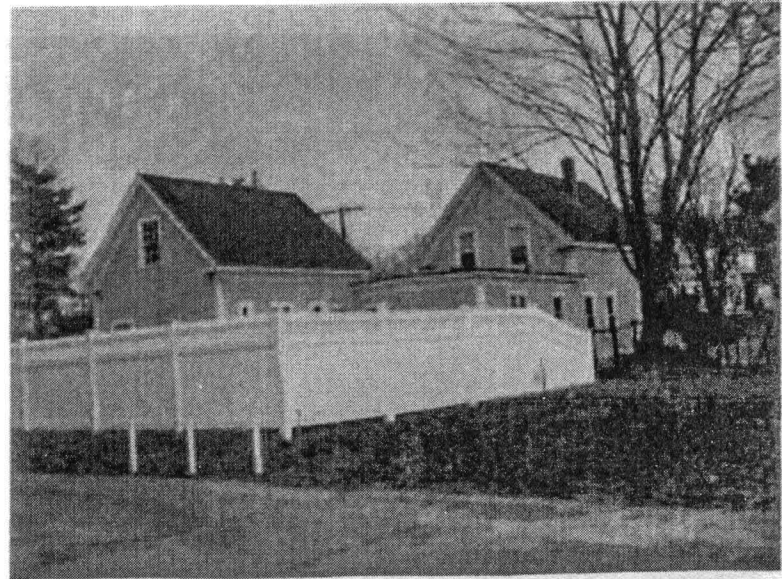
Main House ell Barn/Garage



Main Ell Barn/Garage  
Right Side



Rear of Barn



Barn Main House  
Left Side

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

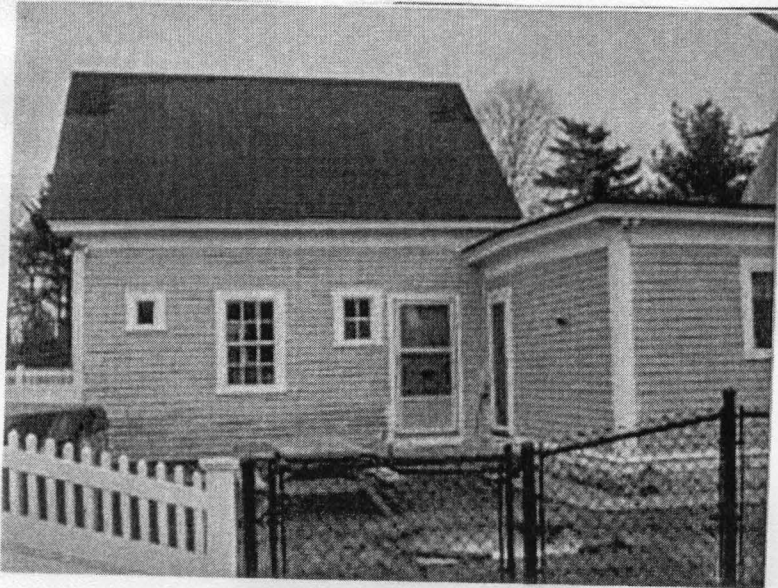
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Area(s) Form No.

April 19, 2007  
Left side



Barn/ Garage "Newer" section  
of E11



40 Billerica Road  
Middlesex North District of Deeds

Bk. 2220, pg. 438	12 Nov. 1976	Nina G. & Wallace A. Greig to Melchore T. Jr. & Jocelyn E. Ciulla, 40 Billerica Rd. \$25,000 land & buildings: north side Billerica St. same: 1946 Greig deed, Bk. 1037, pg. 160 William M. Greig died Feb. 17, 1970
Bk. 1037, pg. 160	02 Aug. 1946	William M. Greig to William Greig & his wife Nine G. Wallace A. Greig land & buildings: north side Billerica St. same: 1924 Ordway deed, Bk. 715, pg. 456
Bk. 715, pg. 456	24 Nov. 1924	Jennie G. Ordway, widow, Everett, to William M. Greig land & buildings: north side Billerica St.
Middlesex Probate Docket #		Estate of Charles A. Ordway
Bk. 421, pg. 257	09 July 1908	Bertha M. Wilson to Charles A. Ordway, Everett land & buildings: north side Billerica St. same: part of 1881 Freeman deed, Bk. 150, pg. 145
Bk. 150, pg. 145	16 Sept. 1881	Samuel J. Freeman, Lowell, to Bertha M. Wilson, wife of Moses W. Wilson \$510 47,310 sq. ft. : lots 1 & 2 on Perham plan July 6, 1872 55,775 sq. ft. adjoining above lot: lots 6 & 7 on Perham plan same: 1872 Perham deed, Bk. 87, pg. 512

40 Billerica Rd.

**Letter to Jocelyn Crulla**, 40 Billerica Rd. Dec. 1979

written by Joannie Bryant, daughter of Mrs. Sweet, who lived in the house

Have meant to write ever since your letter arrived. I can't tell you how excited I was. Kept putting off writing back because I was trying to get an enlargement of the picture of your house. Also am trying to get my mother to jot down what she remembers of the house. She has told me that there was a pump in the kitchen and a well – her mother kept butter and milk cool by putting it in a bucket down the well. The parlor was only used on Christmas as she remembers it. Back of the kitchen was a passageway to the barn. In the passageway was a 2 or 3 hole outhouse. (I wasn't supposed to mention that.) Her two older brothers set fire to the barn by smoking out in back of it. Her mother's name was Alice Warren Sweet and her younger brother, Elmer Warren, lived in Chelmsford/ The Fowles lived across the street and she used to pick violets and ladyslippers in the woods in back of Fowles.

I'll try to find out more if she can remember. My mother will be 80 next year.

If you ever come to California, we would love to have you stay with us. We are about 20 minutes from Disneyland and 30 minutes from the beach.

We have four children but they have all grown up and have places of their own – therefore we have lots of room. I will keep trying for an enlargement and will try not to let such a long time go by before I write again.

Joannie & Don Bryant

**Lowell Courier-Citizen**

Tuesday, June 26, 1906, morning edition

**Chelmsford**

**Death of A.J.W. Sweet After a  
Long Illness.**

A.J.W. Sweet died at his home on Billerica street, yesterday afternoon after an illness that had confined him to the house since last October. He was a native of Pottsdam, N.Y., where he was born 64 years ago. He had been a resident of Chelmsford for the past eleven years removing from Allston with his family. For a number of years he was engaged in the lightning rod business in which he was well known. He was a member of the American Order of United Workmen. A wife, one son and daughters survive him.





